



Congress of the United States  
House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515-4100

November 8, 2017

The Honorable Sonny Perdue  
Secretary  
U.S. Department of Agriculture  
1400 Independence Avenue, S.W.  
Washington, DC 20250

Dear Secretary Perdue,

Rodeo is a sport that contains diverse contests. The outcomes of these contests are heavily dependent both on the skill of the contestants and in many instances, the inherent differences between the sexes. Whether it is barrel racing or calf roping, the differences between the male and female competitors can create unfair advantages. To that end, a number of my constituents have expressed concern to me that the U.S. Department of Agriculture's legal opinion from 1972 is advantaging some competitors over others in an otherwise fair sport.

In South Dakota, the 4-H organization is affiliated with many youth rodeo events. As you know, 4-H is the nation's largest youth program. The organization has a rich history dating back over a hundred years. Since its founding, 4-H has encouraged participation by both sexes. Over the years, the organization spread across the nation. With the passage of the Smith-Lever Act and the creation of the Cooperative Extension System, youth across the nation gained the opportunity to increase their knowledge of agriculture and life skills.

As a mother who has had three children participate in the program and volunteered for over 16 years, I respectfully request your department to conduct a review of its legal opinion on the issue of whether such sex-separate events violate Title IX of the Civil Rights Amendments of 1972. Specifically, whether Title IX requires youth rodeos operated in cooperation with 4-H not to be sex-segregated or sex-exclusive. I believe upon review, you will find that rodeo deserves an exemption.

Thank you for your time. I look forward to your response. If you have any questions, please contact me directly or Andrew Fisher ([Andrew.Fisher@mail.house.gov](mailto:Andrew.Fisher@mail.house.gov)) in my office.

Sincerely,

KRISTI NOEM  
Member of Congress